

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-05 ACDA-12 HA-05 CIAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 YAOUNDE 3547

DEPT PASS USAID

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, CM
SUBJ: FIRST ANNUAL INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) STATE 167901, (B) 77 YAOUNDE 3440, (C) 77 YAOUNDE 3484,
(D) 77 YAOUNDE 3549

1. SUMMARY: THIS AND SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAMS WILL CONSTITUTE THE ANNUAL
INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE. THE PRESENT
TELEGRAM RESPONDS TO PARAGRAPH 3A1-3 OF REFTTEL A. IN ESSENCE
THIS IS AN UPDATE OF INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED (SEE
REFTTELS B THROUGH D). END SUMMARY.

2. DESCRIPTION OF US INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH THE VITAL NATIONAL
SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE US ARE NOT DIRECTLY ENGAGED, THERE ARE
PERSUASIVE REASONS FOR CONTINUING THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
TO CAMEROON.

A) SINCE INDEPENDENCE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT
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AHIDJO, CAMEROON HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS TOWARD UNITING
ITSELF AND TOWARD INSTITUTIONALIZING A STABLE, PROGRESSIVE, AND
COMPARATIVELY OPEN POLITICAL SYSTEM. IT IS CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST
OF THE US TO FOSTER AND ENCOURAGE COMEROON'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THIS DIRECTION. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE GURC CONSIDERS
ITSELF AND ITS PROGRAM TO BE THREATENED BY THE GROWING INSTABILITY
IN CENTRAL AFRICA; IT PERCEIVES ITSELF TO BE AN ISLAND OF

STABILITY IN AN INCREASINGLY VOLATILE AND MENACING REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT. MILITARILY, THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GIVES GURC ONLY SMALL AMOUNT OF MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO MEET ITS PERCEIVED THREAT. MORE IMPORTANT, FROM POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW, THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS TANGIBLE SIGN OF US FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT, AND AS SUCH, PROVIDES THE GURC WITH A FEELING OF SECURITY FAR BEYOND MILITARY UTILITY OF EQUIPMENT PURCHASED. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT WITHOUT THE PROGRAM-AND THE GURC'S FEARS NOT IN THE LEAST ASSUAGED-THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT FEEL IMPELLED IN THE THE INTEREST OF SECURITY TO ADOPT A MUCH MORE RIGID, AUTHORITARIAN, AND CLOSED POLITICAL SYSTEM OR TAKE A LESS MODERATE STANCE IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

B) SINCE INDEPENDENCE CAMEROON HAS BEEN RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING GOOD ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES, ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL VERY POOR. THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, SMALL AS IT IS, FREES RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.

C) PARTIALLY AS A RESULT OF CAMEROON'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GURC HAS RESPECTED VOICE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. IT IS A MEMBER OF SEVERAL AFRICAN RECONCILIATION COMMITTEES, IT HAS PROVIDED TWO SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF THE OAU, AND AN OFFICIAL OF THE MOFA IS CURRENTLY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INFLUENTIAL FIRST COMMITTEE AT UN LOS CONFERENCES. ALTHOUGH OFFICIALLY NON-ALIGNED, CAMEROON GENERALLY TAKES A MODERATE STANCE AND IS OFTEN SYMPATHETIC TO THE POSITIONS OF THE US. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GURC HAS SUPPORTED AND HAS INDICATED THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE US POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS AN INDICATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT ONLY TO CAMEROON, BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY TO OTHER NON-ALIGNED STATES, THAT THE US IS WILLING TO HELP AND SUPPORT ITS FRIENDS TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE.

3. GURC PERCEPTION OF THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT.

INTERNALLY, GURC IS IN STRONG POSITION, HAVING AT LEAST PASSIVE AND SOMETIMES ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. IT IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTERNALLY-FINANCED SUBVERSION. DURING THE 1960'S GURC SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING DOWN THROUGH BOTH RECONCILIATION AND THE FORCE OF ARMS AN INSURRECTION LED BY THE UNION DES POPULATIONS DE CAMEROUN (UPC), ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE ADVOCATES OF INDEPENDENCE AND UNIFICATION DURING THE 1950'S. EVENTUALLY, THE UPC WAS ISOLATED AND EXCLUDED FROM POWER BECAUSE OF ITS RADICALISM AND RESORT TO VIOLENCE. DURING THE INSURRECTION THE UPC RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE USSR, CUBA, CONGO AND ALGERIA.

A) THE PAST HISTORY OF EXTERNALLY-SUPPORTED AND FINANCED INSURRECTION HAS CAUSED MANY HIGH-LEVEL CAMEROONIANS TO FEEL THAT CAMEROON IS VULNERABLE TO SUBVERSION FROM ABROAD. ALWAYS UNCOMFORTABLE BECAUSE THERE REPORTEDLY REMAIN UPC SUPPORTERS IN FRANCE, ALGERIA, ANGOLA AND MOST IMPORTANTLY CONGO, GURC'S FEARS ARE

ONLY MADE MORE ACUTE BY CURRENT SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES
IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ANGOLA. THEY INTERPRET SUCH EVENTS AS
SHABA I AND II AS THREATS AGAINST THE SECURITY OF CAMEROON. FOR
EXAMPLE, SOME HIGH-LEVEL CAMEROONIAN OFFICIALS ASSERT THAT SO LONG
AS THE CORRUPT MOBUTU REGIME REMAINS IN POWER, ZAIRE WILL BE AN
INVITING TARGET FOR THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS; CROSS BORDER RAIDS
WILL CONTINUE, AND EVENTUALLY MOBUTU WILL FALL AND BE REPLACED BY
A SOVIET/CUBAN-SUPPORTED REGIME. SHOULD THIS DEVELOPMENT OCCUR,
IT IS LIKELY THAT CONGO WOULD REEVALUATE ITS CURRENT POLICY,
WHICH IS MUCH MORE MODERATE THAN IN THE PAST. AT THIS POINT,
GURC OFFICIALS CLAIM, TIME WILL BE RIPE FOR RESUMPTION OF UPC
INSURRECTION, ONCE AGAIN WITH SOVIET-CUBAN SUPPORT AND USING CONGO
AS STAGING AREA FOR RAIDS INTO CAMEROON. SOME OFFICIALS GO SO FAR
AS TO SAY ABOVE SCENARIO IS PART OF SOVIET MASTER PLAN FOR ACHIEVING
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HEGEMONY IN AFRICA. THUS, GURC IS NERVOUS ABOUT SOVIET/CUBAN
PRESENCE IN THE CONGO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, THE HORN AND ANGOLA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 YAOUNDE 3547

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GURC VIEWS CHADIAN PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE MALLOUM GOVERNMENT AND

LIBYAN-FINANCED FROLINAT IN SAME CONTEXT, BUT IN THIS CASE THE LIBYANS ARE ACTING AS THE SOVIETS' SURROGATES.

B) CAMEROON IS ALWAYS UNEASY ABOUT THE PERHAPS OVERLY DEFENSIVE TOWARD NIGERIA, WHICH IS MUCH LARGER IN POPULATION AND TERRITORY, CONSIDERABLY MORE WEALTHY, AND MILITARILY MUCH STRONGER. ALTHOUGH THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW A GOOD-NEIGHBOR POLICY, THERE ARE MANY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT, OF WHICH BOTH ARE WELL AWARE. FIRST, THEY SHARE A LARGELY UNDEFENDED AND UNPATROLLED BORDER OF OVER 1,000 MILES. SMUGGLING IS RAMPANT. SECOND, PRIOR TO 1961, ANGLOPHONE WEST CAMEROON WAS ADMINISTERED AS PART OF NIGERIA. THERE ARE STILL THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS IN WEST CAMEROON WHO IDENTIFY AS NIGERIANS RATHER THAN AS CAMEROONIANS, AND GURC IS WELL AWARE OF THE APPEAL OF IRREDENTISM. FINALLY, THERE IS STILL OPPOSITION IN NIGERIA TO GOWON'S 1975 MARITIME BORDER CONCESSIONS TO AHIDJO, EVEN THOUGH THESE WERE LATER CINFIRMED BY OBASANJO. THE BORDER AREA CONTAINS CAMEROON'S CURRENT MODEST OIL PRODUCTION FACILITIES, WHICH MAKES IT THE MOST LIKELY
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AREA OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. FROM THE CAMEROONIAN VIEWPOINT, ALL THESE PROBLEMS ARE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY OBASANJO'S APPARENTLY FIRM INTENTION TO RETUN NIGERIA TO CIVILIAN RULE. THE GURC IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF NIGERIA'S PAST HISTORY OF INSTABILITY WHILE UNDER CIVILIAN RULE AND ITS POTENTIAL DANGER TO CAMEROON. WHEN ALL THESE FACTORS ARE COMBINED WITH CAMEROON'S RELATIVE WEAKNESS, THE THREAT OF NIGERIA IS PERCEIVED BY THE GURC AS OVERWHELMING.

C) IN SUM, CAMEROON TENDS TO SEE ITSELF AS THE ONLY STABLE COUNTRY IN AN INCREASINGLY TUMULTUOUS REGION. IT FEELS THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT ITSELF FROM BEING ENGULFED IN THE REGIONAL INSTABILITY IS BY HAVING A WELL-EQUIPED DEFENSIVE FORCE.

4. MISSION PERCEPTION OF THE THREAT. THE MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE GURC IS BASICALLY CORRECT IN ITS VIEW THAT CAMEROON TENDS TO BE STABLE WHILE THE REST OF CENTRAL AFRICA,IF ANYTHING, IS BECOMING MORE UNSTABLE. THERE IS UNDENIABLY THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE INSTABILITY OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES COULD SPILL OVER INTO CAMEROON AS IT HAS IN THE PAST WITH REFUGEES FROM NIGERIA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, CHAD. SOME PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES ARE JUSTIFIED. IN CONTRAST TO GURC'S VIEW, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS RELATIVELY UNLIKELY THAT CAMEROON WILL BECOME A DIRECT TARGET FOR SOVIET/CUBAN-SPONSORED SUBVERSION SO LONG AS IT MANAGES TO ISOLATE ITSELF FROM THE INSTABILITY OF THE REGION. CAMEROON WILL PROBABLY REMAIN STABLE SO LONG AS IT IS ABLE TO CONTINUE ITS PRESENT COURSE OF REASONABLY RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RELATIVELY ENLIGHTENED GOVERNMENT. AS STATED ABOVE, HOWEVER, THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS A SMYMBOL OF US SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT, IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN GURC'S CONTINUING ITS PRESENT POLICIES.

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